

In the Claims:

17. (currently amended) A method for extracting a tissue sample from a desired site, the method comprising the steps of:

    piercing tissue with an instrument, the instrument comprising an outer hollow cannula and an inner member having a distal end portion, the inner member at least partially disposed within the hollow cannula, and the inner member having a plurality of hooked extractors associated with the distal end of the inner member;

    positioning the hollow cannula within the tissue at a desired tissue site;

    actuating a first mechanism associated with the instrument to move the distal end portion of the inner member distally, relative to the outer hollow cannula, so that the distal end portion expands radially and engages a tissue sample to be extracted;

grasping the tissue sample with the plurality of hooked extractors associated with the distal end of the inner member;

    actuating a second mechanism associated with the instrument to move the outer hollow cannula distally, relative to the distal end portion, to radially retract the distal end portion; and

    withdrawing the instrument, with the tissue sample, from the tissue.

18. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein the step of piercing tissue comprises piercing tissue with an end portion of the outer hollow cannula.

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (previously amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein the step of actuating the first mechanism comprises releasing energy stored in a spring element.

22. (previously amended)The method of Claim 17 wherein the step of actuating the second mechanism comprises releasing energy stored in a spring element.

35. (canceled).